

Washington, D.C. – Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) voted for legislation last week that will spur job creation in the American clean energy industry and strengthen rural economies that have been hit hardest by the economic downturn. The Rural Energy Savings Act, or "Rural Star," will provide loans to American families and farmers to improve their energy efficiency and lower their utility bills. It will create American manufacturing and installation jobs in the process.

"American families and farmers can be a major part of our economic recovery," said Barrow. "We're giving them the tools they need to make their homes and farm buildings more energy efficient. That'll lower their bills and boost the economy at the same time. The savings from energy upgrades will cover most of the cost of the loan, the materials used for these upgrades are made in America by American manufacturers, and the installation and renovation is work that can't be outsourced."

The programs in this bill will offer homeowners loans from about \$3,000 to \$7,500 to eliminate the upfront cost of home energy upgrades, which customers will then repay over 10 years on their electric bill. Their energy savings from the renovations will cover most of the cost of the loan.

The Rural Star and Loan Star programs will boost demand for energy efficient products, materials, and construction and installation services that are made in America. Over 90% of these products and materials —caulking, insulation, HVAC systems, hot water heaters, sealant, windows, doors other structural materials — are made in America.

"This is the kind of work that will be done right here at home, and that's how we're going to get our economy back on the road to recovery," said Barrow.

The Rural Energy Savings Act has the support of the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association, the National Association of Realtors, the National Association of Home Builders, Alliance to Save Energy, Home Star Coalition, Third Way, the Retail Industry Leaders Association, and the National Lumber & Building Material Dealers Association.

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